

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed on February 4, 2004 has been carefully considered. In the Office Action, the Examiner stated "that there is a difference in the processes of making the claimed water sorptive product."

In the Office Action mailed on October 1, 2001, Claims 1-13 of the present application were restricted under 35 U.S.C. §121 to two inventions, namely, Group I, including Claims 1-6 drawn to a water sorptive product, and Group II, including Claims 7-13 drawn to a method for improving a water sorptive product. In the response mailed to the USPTO on October 21, 2001, Group I claims were elected for examination, and Group II claims were canceled without prejudice to Applicants' right to file a divisional application directed to the cancelled claims.

In this Request For Continued Examination (RCE) application, Applicants are electing for examination Group II, including Claims 7-13. Also, Applicants are withdrawing from consideration Group I, including Claims 1-6, without prejudice to Applicants' right to file a divisional application directed to the withdrawn claims.

In representing Claims 7-13, Applicants have editorially amended Claims 7 and 13. Also, Applicants are presenting new Claims 14-19 that are drawn to a method for making a water sorptive product. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of Claims 7-19 of the application by the Examiner in light of the above amendments.

In light of the amendment herein, Applicants submit that Claims 7-19 of the case are in condition for immediate allowance and respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If, however, any issues remain unresolved, the Examiner is invited to telephone the Applicants' counsel at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,



Stanislav Antolin
Reg. No. 34,979

Smith Moore LLP
P.O. Box 21927
Greensboro, NC 27420
(336) 378-5516

Date: May 14, 2004

File No. 5003073-005US2

657296

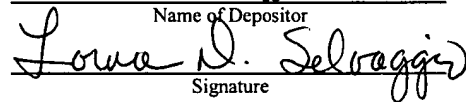
CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS DOCUMENT IS BEING DEPOSITED WITH THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE AS FIRST-CLASS MAIL, IN AN ENVELOPE ADDRESSED TO: MAIL STOP RCE, COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS, P.O. BOX 1450, ALEXANDRIA, VA 22313-1450, ON

May 14, 2004
(Date of Deposit)

Lorna Selvaggio

Name of Depositor



Signature

May 14, 2004

Date of Signature